

Panic attacks

A panic attack is an exaggerated form of the body's natural response to fear, stress or excitement. It's caused by adrenaline being released to prepare the body for 'fight or flight' but it can happen when no danger is present.

Attacks may be frightening, but they are not harmful or dangerous. One in three people can expect to have a panic attack at some stage. It is common for healthy, young adults to have occasional panic attacks.

People who are depressed, or have anxiety disorders, asthma or diabetes may be more prone. So is anyone taking stimulants (eg caffeine or amphetamines) or withdrawing from tranquillisers.

An attack may be as short as a few seconds or as long as an hour. Anything longer is likely to be a series of short attacks.

Same day appointments

Monday to Friday

Access through **iPoint**

Workshops and support groups

See website for details

hud.ac.uk/wellbeing-disability-services



Wellbeing and Disability Services
Level 4
Student Central
Email. studentwellbeing@hud.ac.uk
Tel. 01484 471001



UoHWellbeing



@WellandDis_HudU

University of
HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring tomorrow's professionals

17157

University of
HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring tomorrow's professionals

What happens during a panic attack?

How your body may react:

- Hot or cold flushes.
- Racing heartbeat.
- Dry mouth.
- Sweating.
- Rapid breathing.
- Dizziness.

How you may feel:

- Terrified.
- That you will faint.
- That you are having a heart attack.
- That you are going mad.

How to cope with attacks

Initially it can be difficult to prevent an attack but you can learn to cope and shorten them. If you can learn to relax they will soon pass. Once you realise that you can control the panic and that they are not harmful, you will feel more confident about facing stressful situations.

Breathing

Over-breathing during an attack gives your lungs too much oxygen and too little carbon dioxide. This can cause dizziness, tingling and shakiness.

To reverse the cycle:

1. Breathe in and out of a paper bag until you calm down.
2. Breathe from your diaphragm. Place your hands on your stomach and breathe in slowly through your nose to a count of 4. Your stomach should expand. Breathe out to a count of 4 and your stomach should collapse. Repeat 4 times.

Remember

1. What you are experiencing is nothing more than an exaggeration of normal bodily stress reactions.
2. Panic attacks are not harmful or dangerous.
3. Focus on the positive aspects of your life... not on how bad you feel. If you feel an attack coming on try to distract yourself with a pleasurable task to stop it getting worse.
4. Reassure yourself when you have an attack. Tell yourself you're going to be fine whatever your fears, you are not going to die, or go mad.
5. Don't assume that you will always panic in all future situations.
6. Don't fight your feelings. Accept and face them. The core of the problem is fear of fear.
7. Use each attack as a chance to practice your skills and an opportunity to make progress.
8. Don't depend on others for reassurance. It's better to start relying on yourself and your own coping strategies.
9. Think of the progress you will have made so far and how pleased you will feel when you succeed this time.
10. When you feel better, look around you and plan what to do next!
11. You may find it useful to access the Anxiety Management workshops and/or the Mind Your Head support group - see overleaf for details.

Other useful contacts:

Counselling Service

Tel. 01484 471001

Email. counselling@hud.ac.uk

No Panic

Web. www.nomorepanic.co.uk

